

By Journalist 1st Class (SW/AW) Rob Kerns

Campaign drug free...

the election
where kids
are the
winners



Yeoman 1st Class Jerry Kingsbury knows that engaging and challenging youth to stay drug free is paramount to a successful and fruitful future.

NEW ORLEANS—To help assure victory in the war on drugs the U.S. Navy Reserve Force has unleashed its own weapon of mass destruction Campaign Drug Free (CDF).

Part of the Navy Community Service Program (NCSP), CDF is a voluntary program emphasizing Navy Core Values and Sailors as role models. The campaign encourages positive choices and discourages drug abuse. CDF is a Chief of Naval Operations flagship program and Navy wide program helmed by the Reserve Force.

Using service members in uniform as positive role models CDF teaches children the dangers of using drugs.

"We go to schools in uniform and talk to kids about how we have succeeded in life without using drugs," said Yeoman 1st Class Jerry Kingsbury, New Orleans representative for CDF. "We also try to help kids realize the dangers of using drugs."

Using presentations designed for different age groups, CDF volunteers work with their local schools and youth groups giving presentations and answering questions from their audiences.

"The presentations we give aren't designed for just one age group. We have several presentations so we can reach out to kids from kindergarten to 12th grade," said Kingsbury.

Working in schools around the country CDF reached more than 20,000 students during the 2004 campaign.

"We have over 120 presenters spreading the message around the country," said Capt. Dennis Ahern, CDF national coordinator.

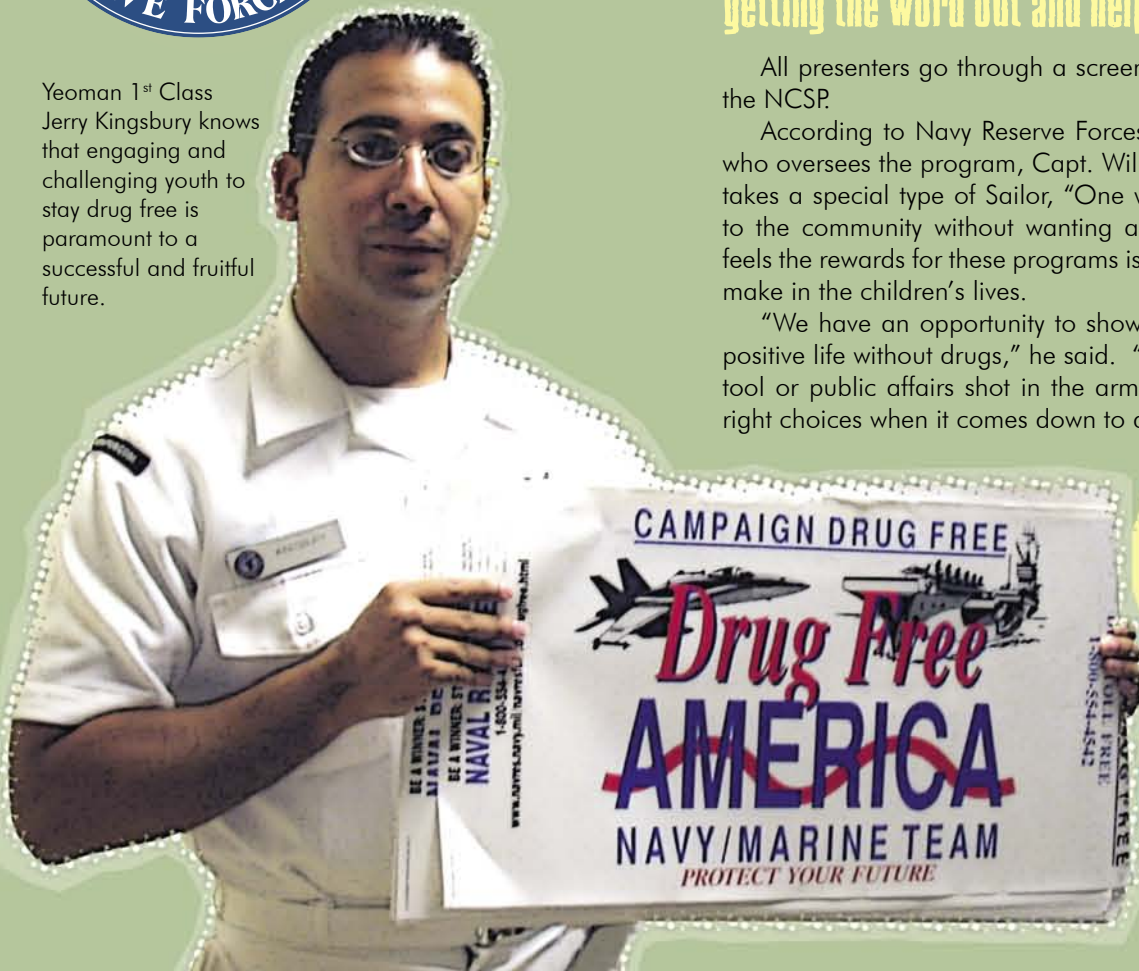
"All of our presenters are very dedicated to getting the word out and helping young people."

All presenters go through a screening process established in the NCSP.

According to Navy Reserve Forces Command Chief of Staff who oversees the program, Capt. William S. Beyer, this program takes a special type of Sailor, "One who is willing to give back to the community without wanting any compensation." Beyer feels the rewards for these programs is the difference its members make in the children's lives.

"We have an opportunity to show children the benefits of a positive life without drugs," he said. "The result isn't a recruiting tool or public affairs shot in the arm. It's children making the right choices when it comes down to drugs."

Folsom Elementary students salute the mentors in a show of appreciation.



With CDF growing every year other drug deterrence programs have fallen under its umbrella.

"CDF is a doorway," said Kingsbury. "Once inside there are many different avenues in which to get involved and help in getting the word out and being a positive role model."

The three major programs under CDF are the Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program or D.A.R.E. that works in cooperation with local police departments, Drug Education for Youth or D.E.F.Y working alongside the Department of Justice and the Drug Enforcement Agency lead Red Ribbon Week.

Looking back over the 2004 contribution of CDF Beyer is happy Sailors are out helping get the word out but wanting more participation from the Reserve Force in this years in this year's campaign.

"At a glance 120 Sailors out talking to students looks pretty good," he said. "However, we are a Reserve Force of over 30,000 and when you look at that number there is a lot more we could be doing. We have so many Sailors who are great role models; we need to utilize them to their fullest."

According to Ahern, who is a drug and alcohol psychologist in his civilian capacity, the use of role models has proven itself as a great detractor in drugs. When children see positive examples in front of them they are less likely to use drugs.

As this year's program continues to grow and positively influence children Beyer sets higher and higher goals for CDF and encourages greater participation from every Sailor.

"I would like to have a active coordinator with a team of folks at every reserve center. This way our message is getting out to every neighborhood in America. It's not the Navy that benefits from this...it's the kids, it's America and our future." TM

honor courage commitment

Navy core values are tools used to influence students life choices.

Repeated positive discussion and example are the hallmarks to reach young minds on their level.



US Navy photos by Mrs. Diana Kingsbury.



Quartermaster 1st Class Mark Vernon (c) and Yeoman 1st Class Jerry Kingsbury (r) present CDF certificate to Belle Chasse Academy school counselor Alicia Kelly, as they did numerous times across the country.

